



## AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE **NEWS ARTICLES**

### **America Supports You: Community Unites to Benefit Marine**

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 20, 2006 – Marine Lance Cpl. James Gentile’s path in life was forcibly altered when he was shot in the face while on patrol with Gulf Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines in Ramadi, Iraq.

That was in April 2004, just a few days after his 21st birthday. His path is about to change again, thanks to the community of San Juan Capistrano, Calif., and the California-based nonprofit organization, Homefront America. The two entities are planning a fundraiser to benefit Gentile.

Homefront America works to honor servicemembers by supporting their families while they’re deployed, according to the organization’s Web site. It also is a member of America Supports You, a Defense Department program highlighting ways Americans and the corporate sector support the nation’s servicemembers.

“When we met him - this was back a couple of months or so ago - he’d already gone through 18 surgeries,” Mamie Yong Maywhort, Homefront America’s chief financial officer, said. “He has a long road ahead of him.”

While Gentile is anxious to get on with his life, he’s having to leap some hurdles, Maywhort said.

Medically retired from the Corps in July with the rank of corporal, Gentile faces more surgeries, all in San Diego and away from his family. Those factors make working on a college degree more difficult for him.

“‘Once a Marine, Always a Marine,’ is so true, because nothing is stopping this kid. He’s taking online classes,” Maywhort said. “The (online) classes will enable him some flexibility to take the courses around his surgery.”

And though he’s receiving 50 percent of his military pay, he’s having to be very careful about finances, Maywhort said. He’d like a job, even a part-time position, but his situation has made some employers shy away from hiring him.

“He’s just kind of feeling his way out into the civilian world right now,” Maywhort said. “He thought he had a position, but then it didn’t work out. ... They had all kinds of concerns that maybe his disability could be a liability issue. So that’s hindering him.”

Gentile’s injuries left him with reduced visual acuity in his right eye, she said. Homefront America is working with the employers in the community to help find him a part-time job with the flexibility he needs to continue his recovery.

The Oct. 8 fundraiser will help Gentile overcome some these hurdles, as well, Maywhort said. The event will include a barbecue and western dance at the historic Swallows Inn saloon in San Juan Capistrano beginning at “high noon.” Donations will be accepted at the door as well as via the Homefront America Web site and regular mail service.

Any donations made by the latter methods need to be marked specifically for “injured American heroes,” she said.

The fundraiser also will include raffles for items donated by community merchants, Maywhort said. Anything raised during the event will help bridge any financial gaps Gentile may encounter in the near future. Because he’s not comfortable with being the sole beneficiary of the event, Gentile requested that any “extra” funding help other injured servicemembers.

Maywhort encouraged those who could attend, to do so, “if for no other reason than to shake Corporal Gentile’s hand and give him a hug and to let him know that they do care.”

#### **Related Sites:**

[Homefront America](#)  
[America Supports You](#)